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TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: 27 NEW CARAVANS EXPAND THE FOOTPRINT OF ELI

REF: JERUSALEM 347

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (S/NF) SUMMARY: PolOff visited Eli settlement February 26 and saw ongoing construction of 27 new caravans at the settlement's westernmost edge. Mayor Eli Shtul told PolOff that the caravans will share infrastructure with 17 existing permanent structures called Neve Shir built in 1991. These new caravans extend approximately 250 meters north of Eli's existing built-up area in an area well east of the separation barrier. Satellite and surface imagery of Eli is available at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/jerusalem>. END SUMMARY.

27 New Caravans

12. (C) Following February 20 press reports of new caravans at the Central West Bank settlement of Eli, PolOff visited Eli with Mayor Lior Shtul on February 26. PolOff saw a construction crew completing assembly piece-by-piece of 27 caravans. The caravans are lined up in two rows at the settlement's far western edge and extend northward from Neve Shir, an area with 17 permanent structures that was built in 11991. The caravans share Neve Shir's water, electricity, and sewage infrastructure.

13. (S/NF) Shtul told PolOff that he issued permits for the installation of the new caravans. Satellite imagery from January 2008 show the caravans in the initial stages of construction.

Eli Footprint Extended North by 250 Meters

14. (C) Neve Shir's 17 permanent duplex structures - with 34 homes - form a NW to SE arc at Eli's westernmost point. The new caravans were installed east of the permanent structures and extend Eli's footprint approximately 250 meters northward. (Note: A steep ridge prevents further expansion northward beyond the new caravans. End Note) Walking these 250 meters with PolOff February 26, Shtul said he plans to install more caravans as necessary.

New Caravans in Questionable Area

15. (C) As noted reftel, the GoI defines a "legal" settlement as meeting the four following criteria: a) it follows a government resolution to establish a new community; b) is on state land; c) has an approved plan; and d) has clearly defined municipal and jurisdictional boundaries determined by the regional military commander. If a settlement does not meet all four criteria, it is illegal by GoI standards. Eli has an approved plan and defined

municipal boundaries. However, in late 2007, the Civil Administration made public the municipal boundaries of settlements in response to a Peace Now court action. Peace Now reviewed these records and determined that Eli has grown outside its approved plan and its municipal boundaries, including in the area of Neve Shir. The area in which the new caravans is located is also outside the municipal boundaries, based on information obtained by Peace Now.

Caravans for New Immigrants?

¶6. (C) During his visit, PolOff saw a five car GoI Ministry of Absorption and Immigration delegation survey the new caravans as well as a young couple whom Shtul said are considering renting a caravan. Shtul added that he rents out the new caravans for 1000 NIS (approximately USD 285) per month.

Comment

¶7. (C) From a "Google Earth" perspective, the 27 caravans extend Eli's footprint 250 meters northward and expand the settlement's built up area. They do not "fill in" any part of Eli or constitute vertical extensions of existing structures.

Most of the residents moving into the caravans are newlyweds, which is typical of caravan occupants in the West Bank. Eli's 27 new caravans, like those at Maskiyyot (reftel), are especially problematic because they are located well east of the separation barrier.

WALLES